

VZCZCXRO3783
OO RUEHPA
DE RUEHUJA #2269/01 3231525
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 181525Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4481
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1508
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0494
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 0278
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 002269

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/W, INR/AA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/17/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: PRESIDENT SUBMITS MINISTERIAL NOMINEES
FOR SENATE CONFIRMATION

REF: ABUJA 2146

Classified By: Political Counselor Walter Pflaumer for reasons 1.4. (b
& d).

11. (SBU) On the evening of November 17, Nigerian President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua submitted a list of 13 ministerial nominees to Senate President David Mark for confirmation. Mark presented the list at the opening of the November 18 Senate session. The 13 nominees are expected to fill positions left vacant by Yar'Adua's October 29 removal of 20 ministers (reftel) and the March 26 resignation of the Minister of Health and Minister of State for Health following charges of corruption. Press reports indicated that President Yar'Adua may also seek to fill the Minister of Energy position, which has heretofore nominally been encumbered by the President himself (under both Obasanjo and Yar'Adua). Per Nigerian law, the list of ministerial nominees is submitted to the Senate without an indication of ministerial portfolios. Although there are currently 22 vacant ministerial positions (23, if we include the Minister of Energy), only 13 names were submitted in this initial tranche.

12. (C) COMMENT. Our initial read of the nominees is that this first tranche includes only less controversial individuals; we expect subsequent nominees to include persons with more "political baggage." It is made up mainly of "technocrats" in a Nigerian sense -- meaning individuals who have some experience working within the bureaucracy, rather than just as politicians. These technocrats include current Energy Advisor Rilwanu Lukman, NAFDAC Director General Akunyili, Director of the National Committee on AIDS Babatunde Osotimehin, and former Minister of Agriculture Shettima Mustafa. We also note several close allies of former President Obasanjo on the list -- in particular Rilwanu Lukman, Babatunde Osotimehin, Sam Egwu, and Ibrahim Kazaure -- which may indicate that the reconciliation between Yar'Adua and Obasanjo of which we have heard is real. END COMMENT.

13. (SBU) Ministerial nominees:

-- Rilwanu Lukman (Kaduna State), current Advisor to Yar'Adua on Energy and former President (1985-1989) and Secretary General (1995-2000) of OPEC. Lukman headed the Power Sector Reform Committee which submitted its report to Yar'Adua in June 2008. He served as Special Advisor on Petroleum and

Energy Matters and Chairman of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation under Obasanjo from 1999 to 2003. Lukman has served previously as Minister of Mines, Power and Steel (1984-85); Minister of Petroleum Resources (1986-1989); Minister of Foreign Affairs (1989-1990); and Chairman of the Board of the National Electric Power Authority (1993-1994). Press reports Lukman may be named Minister of Energy if Yar'Adua decides to give up the portfolio, or that he will be named Minister of State for Energy for Petroleum.

-- Sam Egwu (Ebonyi State), former two-term Governor of Ebonyi State from 1999 to 2007 and former President Obasanjo's candidate of choice for Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) Chair in 2007.

-- Dora Akunyili (Anambra State), Director-General of the National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC). She is a member of the PDP and served as Yar'Adua's campaign coordinator for the South East Zone.

-- Shettima Mustafa (Borno State), former Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources under Ibrahim Babangida (1990-1992) and former Treasurer of the PDP. He has a post graduate degree in Biology and is a former professor of agriculture at Ahmadu Bello University.

-- Ibrahim Lame (Bauchi State), former Special Advisor to Obasanjo and founding member of the PDP. Lame is currently Secretary General of the Northern Union, which is headed by Olusola Saraki, father of Kwara State Governor Bukola Saraki. He was an aide to Obasanjo from 1999 to 2003.

ABUJA 00002269 002 OF 002

-- Nuhu Somo Way (Kaduna State), an architect reported to be close to Kaduna Governor Namadi Sambo.

-- Babatunde Osotimehin (Ogun State), Director of the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA). Osotimehin headed a \$90.3 million World Bank HIV/AIDS project. He is presumed to be slated for Minister of Health or Minister of State for Health.

-- Bello Jibril Gada (Sokoto State), current PDP Senator, having served as Senator from 1999 to 2003 as well. He served as Sokoto State Commissioner from 1992 to 1994 and State Secretary to the now-defunct United Nigerian Congress Party from 1997 to 1998.

-- Ibrahim Kazaure (Jigawa State), former Senator. Kazaure served as Jigawa State Presidential Campaign Coordinator for Obasanjo in 1999.

-- Ibrahim Isa Bio (Kwara State). Bio is a relative unknown. (NOTE: Bio is such a newcomer that the none of the press present at the Senate could decipher his name when it was read on the list.)

-- Sani Mohammed Ndanusa (Niger State), current Niger State Commissioner of Transport and Infrastructure.

-- Jibril Maigari (Yobe State). Maigari is a relative unknown.

-- Ikra Aliyu Bilbis (Zamfara State), of the All Nigerian Peoples' Party (ANPP). Bilbis' nomination is believed to have been put forward by the ANPP party as part of the Government of National Unity.

This cable coordinated with Consulate Lagos.
Sanders